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**THE CREDENTIALS OF THE
CHURCH**



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THE CREDENTIALS OF THE CHURCH

BY

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*Lectures delivered on the E. T. Earle Foundation,
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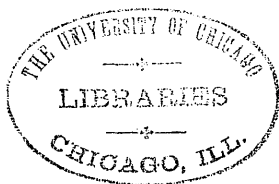
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To

GRACE TINKER DAVIS

whose radiant loyalty and happy service from her childhood unto this day furnish the warrant for all that her husband has written here concerning the church.

PREFACE

THE purpose of this small book is a practical effort to answer two questions, which have been put many times and in varied forms, especially since the close of the great war. The first has been asked by men and women, generally honestly although sometimes in a spirit of cynicism—Why should I give my money and service to the church? The second has been asked with wistful and poignant earnestness by young people seeking to define their vocation in life—What valid claims has the church upon my life warranting me in devoting myself to its leadership? The following pages contain the answer that has been given in many forms to as many variations of these two questions.

While the spirit of the discussion is patently that of a worker who for more than thirty years has found the rewarding field of his labor in the church, the credentials here presented are brought forward in keen sympathy with all earnest questioners. The writer hopes that his book may be found useful with those who are willing to consider all questions fairly and will gladly hear the testimony of one of who has seen the church at work in the community under many conditions.

O. S. D.

The Chicago Theological Seminary

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**THE CREDENTIALS OF THE
CHURCH**

THE CREDENTIALS OF THE CHURCH

CHAPTER I

THE MODERN SITUATION

THIS study is manifestly an inventory of the principal warrants which the writer believes the Christian church possesses to justify its claim upon the support of individuals and communities in the twentieth century. Every institution which makes a practical call upon the resources of the people must justify that claim in the light of the needs of the generation which it seeks to serve. The credentials of the church in the year 1928 are in general those of the church in all centuries past; but they also vary in number and emphasis according to the ideals and needs of contemporary community life.

This is a day of universal and radical criticism. In an era of post-war thinking the permanence of nothing is guaranteed merely because it is ancient or established. Everything has been thrown into the crucible and the kindled fires that are purging the precious and permanent from accumulated dross are hot and pitiless. The church does

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not escape the universal criticism; its friends and defenders would be most unwise to claim for the institutions of religion any exemption from honest investigation. The church has nothing to fear from the truth; it has everything to fear from obscurantism or vain attempts to take refuge in authority and special privilege.

The sources of this criticism in the modern world are pretty much the same that they have been in the past. From the beginning the church has had inevitable enemies. It could not have been otherwise. The church announces a view of life, presents an ethical standard, and exalts the claim of a divine Redeemer and present Lord, which evoke opposition from the defenders of other views of life, other ideals, and other claimants, personal or impersonal, upon the love and loyalty of mankind. The church has laid the ax to the root of the tree; one of its symbols is the sword. In the presence of its claim a mood of permanent indifference is impossible. Therefore the church in the modern world must have its enemies. They will use the arms of the age of the airplane as formerly they used the arms of other civilizations.

Evil of every kind entrenches itself behind institutions and customs against which the church does battle. The significant words of Matt. 16:18, "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it," are generally misunderstood because of failure to perceive the meaning of the analogy. The current idea of the casual hearer or reader of these words is that the church is defensively secure

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against the assaults of evil, represented by the gates of Hades. That is, evil is on the offensive and the church is on the defensive, as has been too often the case. But a moment's reflection will show that Jesus had quite the opposite idea in mind. An army does not attack by means of gates; these are rather for the defense of a city which is undergoing assault. What Jesus gives us is a picture of the militant church attacking entrenched evil of every kind; and the promise is that evil shall not be able, however strongly guarded by its gates, successfully to withstand the attack of the assaulting church. The "simple gospel" is a clarion call to fearless conflict against everything that is contrary to the will of God, whose gates shall not be strong enough so that it will prevail against the church.

This conception of the church militant and aggressive is the answer to the charge that the church is a community parasite, dealing in unrealities. The water system, the fire engines, the school, the library, the club, are not community parasites. They have been called into being because they serve essential community needs; they are supported according as they validate their purpose to increase community well-being. The church is evoked by the religious needs of the community. It is an instrument of the common welfare. It will endure for the same reason.

Much current criticism of the church is superficial, vindictive, and ill-mannered. This disturbs no one. Some of it, however, rests upon valid

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grounds and is warranted. This has to be reckoned with. At the outset we admit in humility certain weaknesses of the church.

In the first place, as an essential part of a developing world, the church shares in the imperfections of all similar institutions. The church is not static or perfect. It could not be thus and remain a part of a growing world. To claim either finality or immutability for the church to-day would be absurd. All forms of community life are developing; so is the church. It has cast off many useless and outgrown functions; it will change within another hundred years as it has in past centuries. We seek the essential factors of truth and permanence in the process of the changing organism.

Again, the unsatisfactory character of the church's practical achievement must be admitted with a painful sense of humility. In certain critical periods when it ought to have come forward as the fearless and sacrificial defender of freedom it has been tyrannical. Sometimes it has been cruel when it ought to have been loving. Occasionally it has been the defender of folly instead of the champion of truth. This is not the whole report of the ideals and practices of the church. These are the blots on the escutcheon and the stains on the white banner, more marked because the field should have been so unsullied and is so white.

Then the members of the churches have not always given the account of themselves that they ought to have given in the moral and spiritual

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life of the community. The church has been bruised by those who, within its membership, betray its ideals, and also by those who, although outside its membership, live up to the ideals of the church with conspicuous success. Concerning these two classes the following remarks are pertinent.

It always has been a fact that unworthy persons tend to seek associations which will assist them in establishing their status on levels beyond their desert. The hypocrite seems to have been a rather active member of the human family from the beginning. The fact that he seeks to profit by means of successful shamming is merely a proof of the worth of that which he seeks to assume. Who ever spent any effort counterfeiting an old tin can? Gold coins and good money are imitated because they are worth so much. The best proof of their value is that they are counterfeited. The very presence of unworthy members in the church is the most satisfactory proof of the value of the character which they imitate.

Regarding those who, outside the membership of the church, apparently live quite as nobly as those within the fellowship, the question may fairly be raised if their achievement is as high as it might have been if they had shared their lives fully with those who are seeking together as church members to realize the Christian ideal. In other words, their character might possibly have been finer and better if they had added to their moral and spiritual energies the increments of

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power which are to be had within the church and which they have missed outside its associations. Nothing more than a speculative answer can be given; but the question is a fair one and the answer, we contend, is obvious. Along with our joy in their attainment is our regret that they have missed something which, we are assured, might have made their achievement even higher than it is.

And thus, with these admissions frankly made, we come to a study of the credentials which the church, as it is, furnishes to the modern world when it claims the support of the community for its program of work. The church today is highly organized; it has a large budget; its financial resources and its good will must be drawn from the community. The people have the right to demand the proofs of its valid claim upon them. A study of these is undertaken in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II

THE HERALD OF GOOD NEWS

A STUDY of the history of the Christian church reveals a significant fact. From the beginning it has regarded itself as the herald or messenger of a body of truth and a way of life which it has called an evangel, a gospel, good news. It has preached and proclaimed this message in supreme confidence that whenever the good news is accepted and made a way of living radical effects are sure to follow which will change the purpose and character of individual life. With sacrificial passion the church has given itself to the publishing of this evangel. It has stated its purpose in its creeds and especially in its hymns.

We've a story to tell to the nations,
That shall turn their hearts to the right,
A story of truth and mercy,
A story of peace and light.

We've a song to be sung to the nations,
That shall lift their hearts to the Lord;
A song that shall conquer evil
And shatter the spear and sword.

We've a message to give to the nations,
That the Lord who reigneth above,
Hath sent us His Son to save us,
And show us that God is love.

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We've a Savior to show to the nations,
Who the path of sorrow has trod,
That all of the world's great people
Might come to the truth of God.

CHORUS

For the darkness shall turn to dawning,
And the dawning to noonday bright,
And Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,
The kingdom of Love and Light.

Perhaps the most representative recent statement of the primacy of the church's message comes from the Lausanne Conference, which, on August 19, 1927, adopted with unanimity the following statement, which is here quoted in full:

THE CHURCH'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD— THE GOSPEL

The message of the Church to the world is and must always remain the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is the joyful message of redemption, both here and hereafter, the gift of God to sinful man in Jesus Christ.

The world was prepared for the coming Christ through the activities of God's Spirit in all humanity, but especially in His revelation as given in the Old Testament; and in the fulness of time the eternal Word of God became incarnate, and was made man, Jesus Christ, the son of God and the son of Man, full of grace and truth.

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Through His life and teaching, His call to repentance, His proclamation of the coming of the Kingdom of God and of judgment, His suffering and death, His resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of the Father, and by the mission of the Holy Spirit, He has brought to us forgiveness of sins, and has revealed the fulness of the living God, and His boundless love toward us. By the appeal of that love, shown in its completeness on the Cross, He summons us to the new life of faith, self-sacrifice, and devotion to His service and the service of men.

Jesus Christ, as the crucified and the living One, as Savior and Lord, is also the centre of the world-wide Gospel of the Apostles and the Church. Because He Himself is the Gospel, the Gospel is the message of the Church to the world. It is more than a philosophical theory; more than a theological system; more than a programme for material betterment. The Gospel is rather the gift of a new world from God to this old world of sin and death; still more, it is the victory over sin and death, the revelation of eternal life in Him who has knit together the whole family in heaven and on earth in the communion of saints, united in the fellowship of service, of prayer, and of praise.

The Gospel is the prophetic call to sinful man to turn to God, the joyful tidings of justification and of sanctification to those

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who believe in Christ. It is the comfort of those who suffer; to those who are bound, it is the assurance of the glorious liberty of the sons of God. The Gospel brings peace and joy to the heart, and produces in men self-denial, readiness for brotherly service, and compassionate love. It offers the supreme goal for the aspirations of youth, strength to the toiler, rest to the weary, and the crown of life to the martyr.

The Gospel is the sure source of power for social regeneration. It proclaims the only way by which humanity can escape from those class and race hatreds which devastate society at present into the enjoyment of national well-being and international friendship and peace. It is also a gracious invitation to the non-Christian world, East and West, to enter into the joy of the living Lord.

Sympathising with the anguish of our generation, with its longing for intellectual sincerity, social justice and spiritual inspiration, the Church in the eternal Gospel meets the needs and fulfils the God-given aspirations of the modern World. Consequently, as in the past, so also in the present, the Gospel is the only way of salvation. Thus, through His Church, the living Christ still says to men "Come unto me! . . . He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

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The fact that this statement could be adopted without dissent by this representative Conference, and that it is placed second in rank in its findings, preceded only by the statement concerning the desirability of unity, shows that on this point there is wide and hearty agreement among all Christian communions.

The first point that is worthy of note is the central place given to the living Christ in this definition of the good news. The preparation for it in the religious experience of Israel, as recorded in the Old Testament, furnishes the warrant for the wide use of the first section of the Bible in the work of the church. The teachings, example, and spirit of Jesus of Nazareth during His earthly life, as these are recorded in the New Testament, give the warrant for the use of the second section of the Bible. The continued impact of the living Lord upon His followers is a third warrant for the preaching ministry of the church in all ages. It was never more imperative and urgent than it is in the strain and uncertainty of the modern world. In the widest import of the word, preaching is still an essential part of the work of the church.

This has been recognized by the church throughout its history. The great commission of Jesus, as recorded in Matthew, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation," furnished definite purpose, practical program, and sustaining energy to the first followers of Jesus. It was a costly obedience. To

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announce the good news involved hardship, self-denial, and sometimes death. Nero's living torches were not lit around the bodies of silent Christians. Every martyr paid the price of utterance. They might have been safe if they had not borne their testimony in costly words. Many victories for free speech had to be won before it ceased to be perilous to speak fully and fearlessly as Jesus commanded.

In obedience to the great commission the church developed a full-orbed statement of its message and a technique by which it was to be most effectively published. Masters of administration, scholars and theologians, leaders of worship arose; but among them the preachers assumed a place of paramount influence. The church always has recognized varieties of gifts in its leadership, as St. Paul did at the beginning; and it has honored its preachers up to the present hour, when criticism of them seems to be especially rife. The fling at the length and prosiness of the sermon is nothing new, although just now it is particularly current and scornful. The charge that the sermon has been over-rated, especially in the churches that arose after the Reformation, is widely urged and has validity in so far as the whole order of worship has been made accidental to the sermon, which always should be placed consistently within an order of worship. There is little likelihood, however, that preaching ever will be made an incidental rather than an essential function of the church. Undoubtedly new and profitable

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evaluations of the sermon will be made as the church redefines its preaching task in reference to the conditions of modern life.

So highly has the church regarded its responsibility for proclaiming the good news that it has selected and trained its strongest young men for this work. The history of theological education is the record of the effort of the church to equip its pastors and preachers for their exacting and imperative service to the community. The science and art of preaching have been studied and taught for centuries, until a body of principles and a practical technique have been developed which command respect in the academic world. The preacher may be born and not made; but he is surely made a better preacher by being trained for his essential work in modern society.

The greater day of preaching lies ahead and not in the past. All criticism of sermons on the ground that they are concerned with mere speculations or are remote from the throbbing life of the community ought to be fully made and the church must reckon with them. Nevertheless the great function remains to be discharged, as it will be, in full accord with the needs of the time. There is an unbroken succession of preaching ministry to be maintained by those who have yielded to the fascination and power of the Christian good news.

We have called the church the "herald" of good news. This word deserves fuller and further study. The church is the messenger; the good

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news is a message. The "evangelist" must possess certain characteristics which are indicated by the old Greek word from which it is derived. The classical example is the runner from Marathon to Athens.* The story is familiar. A battle was being fought, on which depended the welfare of the nation and the city. At the hour of victory on the distant field a runner set out to carry the news to the yearning watchers on the walls of Athens. He stopped at no obstacle; he was stayed by no difficulty. At the cost of sweat and physical anguish he sped. Finally his figure could be defined in the distance by the watchers; then he gave his good news to the people with his last breath. This is the historical incident still pulsing with dynamic vitality behind the word. Out of it we draw certain characteristics of the church as the messenger of good news.

We are thinking of the church as a whole, not the minister alone, as the messenger of good news to a waiting world. To the preacher is committed, according to the principle of division of responsibility and service, the major task of voicing the message through his sermons. This is only a part of the work of the church as the messenger of truth. Only one or two sermons are preached on Sunday in the services of the church for public worship. Every member of the

* Interest in the exploit of Pheidippides has been revived by the Marathon games and especially by the chapter "Marathon Madness" in Richard Haliburton, *The Glorious Adventure*.

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church is a herald of the good news by word and deed and constant influence during the entire week. It is profitable to reflect on the place and influence of the whole church as the ceaseless preacher of the evangel. The minister can discharge only a small part of this essential function. A church can confirm or destroy the minister's message by the way in which the members validate or deny it in their own daily living. This forgotten responsibility ought to be laid with new emphasis upon the conscience of the church, which must be true at the cost of sacrifice to her testimony and message as herald of good news.

The good news is a message. It has not been wrought out merely by processes of logic. It is burning, positive, urgent. The teacher elaborates his system of thought or the findings of his laboratory experiments. The messenger is equally sure of his ground; but there is an ardor in his utterance which the teacher does not necessarily manifest. The preacher knows that his message possesses the power to make a difference with the worth and purpose of life, both for the individual and for the social groups of which he is a member. He cannot, therefore, simply state his propositions with regard only for their fidelity to fact. He is passionately concerned about his message with regard to the way it will be accepted and the difference that it may make with the behavior of those who hear it. Therefore the church must infuse the heat of passion into its work as herald of the good news. The critic who

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said to the Christian, "If I believed what you say you believe, I would crawl over red-hot coal on my hands and knees to tell other men," put his finger no doubt scornfully but with accurate insight, upon the hot place in the Christian program. The church is concerned, passionately concerned, about its message. The recovery of its apostolic ardor and missionary zeal is an essential factor in the problem of the church to-day.

The result of a restored emphasis upon the function of the church as the herald of good news will be a renewal of precision of purpose. In the midst of complex and often conflicting demands upon the Christian group, it is wholly in the interest of definition of aim if the actual purpose to be served in the community can be clearly defined. The activities of the church become better organized when they are definitely projected to serve a clear and positive purpose. The proclamation of good news is one of the essential aims of the church. Therefore preaching, in the broadest possible conception of that activity, is necessary to the work of the church.

Again, the reaffirmation of the purpose of the church as the herald of good news will bring back something of the heroic, the romantic, and the radiant features that have marked the life of the church in the eras of its greatest strength. Whenever the church has fallen into easy times and lazy days, it has been accompanied by a decline in the vigor of its preaching work, if, indeed, the neglect of this primary task has not

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been the cause of the decline. The joy and charm of pioneering experiences has been associated with the activity of preaching. The church has climbed out of its sloughs and times of spiritual dryness by what Sylvester Horne called with such apt phrasing, "The Romance of Preaching." The modern church needs the touch of the heroic and romantic. There is no great "kick" to be gotten out of a large part of the activities of the average church when it is running in the rut of the conventional and the commonplace. The sentence is current to the effect that the only difference between a rut and a grave is depth. A new realization of the joy and charm of preaching will bring this release from routine and humdrum which finally wears a person out, especially if the person be a parson.

A new dedication to the work of proclaiming the gospel to a confused and tired world will bring the community to a new honor for the church. This does not mean that all the people will accept or follow the message of the church. But persons of all shades of experience and grades of opinion respect anyone who believes, at least, that he has a message and is wholly in earnest about giving it. Indecision and lack of conviction are less easily pardoned than even a certain amount of ignorance or failure fully to define the message. Men do like to listen to someone who is convinced that he knows some aspect of living truth of which he is so sure that he simply must "tell the world." Men may not agree;

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they may consider the message inaccurate or only half a truth; but they welcome positive statement and respect the one who makes it. One of the ways by which the church may win the respect of the world is to rebuke its sins and tell it how to discover the Christian way of life.

This function of the church in the modern community has been expressed in the past by the appropriate word "evangelism," whose radical meaning links it up with the giving of the Christian good news to the people. The word is just now suffering a disheartening measure of disrepute because of the way in which it has been badly represented by certain evangelists. On the other hand, evangelism is still the supreme function of the church and the word is not repugnant at all to those who champion its use. Evangelism, when accurately employed, is a word fitly designating the effort of the whole church in all possible ways to become the herald of a vital truth and a way of life comprehending all the powers of each individual and the total activity of all community groups. It may be individual and personal; it may be social and comprehensive. In whatever way it is used, it describes a permanent activity of the church and one that sorely needs to be restored to the modern world, groping for light and help amid the confusion and ruin that have come in the wake of war.

CHAPTER III

THE INSTITUTION OF RELIGION

THE Christian church is the institution of the Christian religion, without which it would be inarticulate and unable to function in the community. In this respect it shares the common character of all institutions, which are devised in order that an ideal purpose may exert energy or do work in society. Back of every institution lies an ideal which the organization is designed and sustained to express. The ideal is first; then the institution emerges in the community to make the ideal concrete and effective.

The universal mutual love of men and women, which is the supreme warrant for all the expressions of lesser motives, has created the family, which comes to its highest expression in Christian monogamous marriage and in fidelity to its bond and relation, according to the teachings of Jesus. The home and the family have the sanction of many lesser ideals and principles; but the primal and supreme support of a home and family is that, with pure hearts and with gentleness and patience, two persons of opposite sex blend their lives in a love that never can die. The institution of the family will be permanent and blessed in so far as

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this ideal constantly imparts its power and support to it. We shall be safe in all the changes that take place in the customs of marriage and the character of the family so long as love in its purity and strength inspires the change and is expressed through it. And we cannot but fear all new phases of family organization that spring out of mere convenience or custom or passing fashion.

The indelible yearning of the human mind for truth and zeal for its fuller discovery calls into existence all the institutions of education: schools, colleges, libraries, the press, and every other concrete expression of these fundamental phases of human intelligence. Schools were not organized because the community felt that it must create them in order to follow a prevailing fashion. The mental powers demand exercise. The vast and only partially explored ocean of truth calls for the adventure of the scholar and the philosopher. If institutions of education were organized and supported merely in the effort to follow a fashion, however commendable it might be, there would be little ground for their permanence and scanty worth from their work. They are in the community as an essential part of its corporate life because men possess the ideal of ampler knowledge and fuller education. So long as this exists as a mental urge among citizens the institutions of culture will continue to be developed and supported out of the common wealth.

Love of native land and country constantly

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call into being the institutions of our political structure. In many cases these are degraded or debauched; but this is because a less worthy ideal has been substituted for the higher love and loyalty which alone can guarantee the quality and persistence of political parties and programs. Whenever the ignoble purpose to exploit the community rather than to serve it seizes upon a political institution, that moment it becomes debased and carries within it the germs of its inevitable and final destruction. The current disparagement of politics in the minds of many citizens is due to the manner in which they have seen these institutions made the instruments of self-aggrandizement by those who have not been controlled by high ideals and standards. Whenever the people recover their consciousness of the true meaning of political responsibility they will purge their decadent institutions and expel dishonest men from public office.

The social nature of man and his yearning to complete his life in practical union with his comrades has been the creative energy which has called into being the social institutions of the community. Many of these, it must be admitted, have been imposed upon the people by promoters and propagandists; but such clubs and fellowships have never lasted long nor has their service enriched the common life to any great extent. The most beneficent and enduring social institutions always have been those that have emerged spontaneously in response to a need which has been

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genuine and native to the life of the people. That which actually makes the community richer and happier in true social values may be expected to endure. We must have fellowship with one another in the sphere of our elemental and common needs. This ideal assures the institution of support and endurance.

Religion is also native to human nature and the institutions of religion are created because of this energy and for the purpose of serving it. Churches are not found in communities because enthusiastic organizers have thrust them upon the people. Priests do not create the institutions of religion; they are called into existence by them, and their function is to serve the religious needs of the people through the institutions which they administer. No ecclesiastical machine, however cleverly constituted and effectively active, could long endure if it were not for the religious needs of the people themselves. The warrant for the church is the religious hunger and yearning of the race, which were never more clamant than they are to-day. If by a sudden calamity all the institutions of religion were swept out of existence in any community, before another twenty-four hours new organizations would be created by the people themselves to serve a purpose which they consider as essential and permanent. The credentials of the church as the institution of religion never will cease to be valid but will grow more vital and compelling as mankind comes

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to the fuller recognition of its essential religious wants.

The question is sometimes asked, Why should the Christian religion attempt to embody itself in its own institutions? Is it not far better to conceive it as a spirit and energy which can best be expressed as religion penetrates and controls all life and all organizations with its mighty and quiet energy? Let it be a genial light, infusing everything with its dynamic splendor and not seeking any other expression. For example, the Baha'i Movement does not seek to devise or to promote institutions of its own; it is a body of principles which claim the suffrage and seek the control of the whole organized life of man. The claim is made that Jesus never sought to organize a church. Instead, He gathered around Him a group of friends whom He inspired to live in His way, with no thought of an ecclesiastical or sacerdotal organization which should seek support for its own corporate activity. At first glance this looks like a self-effacing and noble conception of the Christian religion. A little further reflection, however, will show that religion as the supreme energy and the highest good of man cannot hope to permeate and control human life without possessing the means to accomplish this purpose. These means must be furnished by spontaneous and vital institutions of its own creation. Religion never regards these as ends in themselves but only as the effective means

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for accomplishing the purpose of bringing all life under the control of the religious motive. It is a matter of sheer necessity in keeping with the procedure of the whole human social order. There are peculiar perils involved in this method of procedure; but an institutionalized religion is necessary to the highest human welfare. No pervasive and commanding influence can be exerted in any other way.

Among these dangers is the tendency to place the activity and development of the church itself ahead of the service that the church must render to all life. The modern world is fearfully in bondage to statistics. The first test which is immediately applied in estimating the value of a church is the membership, equipment, and budget of the institution. How inaccurate such a standard may be is revealed by a closer study of the real influence and worth of the church at any one time or place. There are churches which do not rate high in point of buildings or budget which are potent for community good beyond the power of such statistics to reveal. And, on the other hand, the possession of a rich treasury does not insure the influence or power of the institution. The oft-repeated incident of the priest who displayed the treasures of the church, saying, "You see it is no longer necessary for the church to say, 'Silver and gold have I none,'" and to whom the visitor replied, "Truly; and no longer can she say, 'In the name of Jesus rise and walk,'" points clearly the danger here. A militant sectarian spirit tends

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to boast of budgets and buildings. Against this all lovers of the church must be on their guard. The danger is subtle; but it can be overcome.

Another peril is that of officialism and tyranny. Doubtless the ecclesiastic we shall always have with us. And, like the little girl with the little curl, when she is good he is very, very good, and when she is bad he is horrid. The inevitable tendency of possessing official station and power is to increase personal arrogance. This appears even in the church; such are the frailties of human nature. Religious tyranny becomes all the more dreadful just because it is so wholly inconsistent with what ought to be the Christian virtues of humility and willingness to serve. Jesus recognized this clearly and told His friends that they must avoid the pride of the great ones who ruled over others in religious rank and explicitly stated that he who would be truly great among them must be the minister and servant of all. The Christian leader who struts about with a show of authority is of all men most to be pitied. He has lost all sense of the real meaning and genius of his office. To recognize this danger clearly is possibly the best safeguard against falling into the sin of official pride.

The relation between the creative ideal and the institution which it calls into being is one of those reciprocal interactions which ought always to be kept clearly in mind. Each is necessary to the other, as resident life is to every organism. As Bishop Brent vividly stated it, a spirit without a

*(Please correct in next edition, confusion
of gender is always embarrassing.)*

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body is a ghost, and a body without a spirit is a corpse. We are served by neither the formless ideal nor the unformed institution. The modern world is full of organizations out of which the spirit of active service has departed and which consequently have the name to live and nothing more. The carrying power of a great purpose may be felt long after the motive has ceased to energize the institution; and one of the difficult problems in every community is how to conduct the funeral service of a cherished organization which has ceased to function. It has many friends who cannot muster up courage to pronounce the last words. Also there are many great ideals which wait the moment and the leader in order to become vital in the life of the community. There are energies beating urgently at the doors of institutions and seeking to vitalize them with fresh increments of power. Wise and courageous leaders are needed in order to effect this wholesome change. In a word, the healthiest religious life of the community is brought about when old societies which have ceased to function are decently discarded and put out of sight, while the new energies which are ready for the promotion of the religious ideals of the community are expressed in forms of service that match the needs of the people.

The institution of the church, expressing the power of religion for community welfare, never was more needed than it is to-day. There is some kind of a society or organization at hand

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to meet almost every popular need. Indeed, our modern world seems to be over organized and under vitalized. The solution of this problem lies not in removing the church from the community, but rather in making it so effective in touching the whole area of human life that it will be a worthy expression of that which is the crowning and unifying expression of personality, vital religion.

CHAPTER IV

THE AGENT OF COMMUNITY WORSHIP

RELIGION is an essential factor in the developing experience of the individual and the community and must become articulate in the institutions of religion. Therefore the church is the agent of worship for the people.

The worship of the community in appropriate places and by means of dignified and beautiful forms must be provided for as carefully as public health is safeguarded by water supply, disposal of sewage, building restrictions, and guarding against contagious diseases. All this machinery of physical welfare is provided by an alert and discerning community. The intellectual safety of the people is guaranteed by the schools, libraries, and the public press. With the same sagacity and cheerfulness the community should make provision for worship, recognizing the vital importance of the expression of reverence and adoration in the presence of that which we call God.

Man is the animal that reveres, adores, and prays. In childhood we felt so sure of God, who was near to us and open to fellowship, that we prayed with the audacity which was born of our confidence. The little girl who closed her bed-

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time prayer with the simple words, "That's all now, God; stand by," was profoundly reverent and genuinely religious. As the years passed by and we became so wise that we saw the vision "fade into the light of common day," we knew how deep was our need of helps to worship. The sense of awe and wonder that was simple and sincere passed away. The time came when we needed the church to come to our rescue and help us restore the waning certainty that God was still near and cared for us. As J. H. Hutton says, "We have allowed our knowledge of processes to rob us of wonder." This is sadly true. We have grown so wise in the knowledge of laws that we have ceased to wonder at the love and wisdom of the Lawgiver. The world grows richer rather than poorer, however, in its wealth of mystery, majesty, and wonder, the more completely we come to know and understand its processes. To discern this majesty and divinity beneath the external and confusing surfaces of life requires definite effort and aids of various kinds. One of these concrete and practical helps is common worship, which affirms the reality of the divine, expresses it by symbols, and seeks to evoke the temper of reverence and adoration. Therefore one who seeks to do justice to all the powers of personality must not lose the help of common worship to make vivid and actual the divine glory of the universe. Out of the experience of worship the Hebrew poet wrote:

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Lord, I love the habitation of thy house,
And the place where thy glory dwelleth.
(Psa. 26:8.)

Like every other expression of personality, there is an individual and a social aspect to worship. In the last analysis and in practical experience there is no conflict between them and each is necessary to the other. The perfection of individual acts of devotion calls for the supplementing aid of social worship. Common expression of religious experience in appropriate forms can rise no higher than the average level of reverence reached by the individuals composing the group.

The pendulum is constantly tending to swing to one extreme or the other. Indeed, the pendulum figure represents an unhappy phase of all human experiences, the tendency to reach extremes. It was an effort to correct a false social swing which led the prophets and Jesus to protest against the formalism which ceremonies and ritual always tend to cultivate. Therefore Isaiah thundered against the feast days and the ritual which were threatening the very ethical life of the people and called for a return to deeds of week-day holiness. His rebuke of the "temple treaders" is positive and ardent.

But it was against the abuse and not the right use of public and ceremonial worship that Isaiah protested. The Old Testament is full of appreciation of the necessity of social worship for the perfection of individual religious experience. Isaiah "saw the Lord" and received his commission to

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service in the temple. Even the most literal and comprehensive interpretation of the prophetic protest cannot be construed as demanding the abandonment of public worship, but only its right use and emphasis.

In the familiar command of Jesus as recorded in Matt. 6: 1-18, we have the same attitude that we see in the case of Isaiah. The danger of externalism in "doing righteousness" applied to charity, prayer, and fasting. If these were carried out publicly and for the sake of the social impression which they would give, they became ends in themselves and were faults rather than virtues. It is a mistaken interpretation of the intent of Jesus if we construe His commands as meaning that we should give alms only in secret, pray only in the privacy of our own room, and display only a merry face and manner in public. He went to the synagogue and temple. He bore His part in the practice of social religion. He put the individual and social exercises of religion in their right relations, however. He kept both the private and the public expressions of reverence in their proper balance. The meaning of the words of Jesus is thus clarified by His own practice.

We must be careful not to become such defenders of either term of the proposition that we pervert the full meaning of the truth. This is not a case of *either, or*; but of *both, and*. We must employ both the individual practice and the social exercise of worship. The morning watch in secret and the social worship together unite to

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give the best realization of the full values of worship.

If the church is to become the agent of the community through which public worship is to be carried on, it is necessary that it should be equipped to discharge this function. We have already noticed the variety in the modes of public worship which must be available if all the needs of the community are to be met. Therefore it is impossible to define one style of architecture or one form of ritual to which every church must conform. Certain principles, however, may be laid down to which it is desirable that churches shall conform in order that they may discharge the function of worship with the greatest degree of efficiency.

The church building itself comes first for consideration. The place in which a congregation worships influences each individual, and its subtle control of the group is profound. The proportions, the light, the color, the decoration of the building unite in creating the total impression of the church upon the congregation. Perhaps there is no better example of the building ministering to worship than is found in the village churches of England. Solidly built, beautiful in design, suggestive of reverence, these churches leave little to be desired as places of community worship. They are suited to the liturgy by means of which worship is conducted in them; but there is no least reason why similar churches should not be used for a much simpler order of religious service.

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The average village church, especially in the sections of the United States more recently settled, is ugly in appearance and ill fitted to meet the needs of the church program to-day. Churches now being built show a far better appreciation of beauty and dignity in the exterior and interior of the building. In spite of this change there is still much to be desired in the adaptation of the church to the worship of the community; and the education of ministers and building committees needs to be carried much farther in order to insure the erection and equipment of buildings which will be adequate to realize the true purpose of the church in the modern world as the agent of worship.

A fact sometimes overlooked by building committees and congregations in the planning and erection of buildings is their obligation to the community to provide not only a structure which shall serve the needs of the congregation itself, but also one that shall be a permanent asset to the people as a stimulating symbol of moral truth and spiritual beauty. The entire community has a stake in the private property of religious bodies. These buildings are exempt from taxation; and to a certain extent, however slight it may be in individual cases, the taxes of every citizen are increased thereby. This represents an actual contribution made by every tax-payer toward the support of the institutions of religion. The community has the right to expect, therefore, that in the erection of its buildings the religious group

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will not overlook its community obligations; and one of these obligations is the duty to provide such church buildings as will minister to the highest life and culture of the people. An ugly church is a constant menace to fine taste and spiritual incentive, involving all the people and not merely the congregation which disregarded its community relations when it failed to build well. For a beautiful church "plant" costs no more than an ugly one, and it is a direct obligation laid by the community upon the individual religious group.

The interior of the building must be adapted to the religious purpose to carry out which it is designed. This means that there is no single design which will suit all needs. The fixed altar with its stone and the miracle of the mass prescribes a certain ecclesiastical interior. The non-liturgical order of service, calling for an auditorium in which the sermon may be heard as well as a sanctuary in which dignified forms of worship may be carried out, calls for a different equipment, which need not be any less beautiful or suggestive of reverence and worship. The common factor in these different church interiors is that all shall conform to the canons of good taste and fitness of objects to the ends of worship.

The forms or orders of common worship are subject to the same principles that govern the church structure. They are designed to serve the

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needs of the worshipping congregation. They must involve the necessary factors of adoration, praise, prayer, sacrifice and dedication. In the churches possessing an historic and sanctioned liturgy these forms are given; it is the work of the minister, rabbi, or priest to carry them out with a sense of their meaning and reverent regard for their use. In the case of the non-liturgical churches the minister is often the maker as well as the celebrant of the forms of worship. His task is doubly difficult; but it permits a welcome freedom which many ministers use well.

Not only must the essential factors of common worship be present in the order of service, but they must be held in their right proportion, relation, and emphasis. The historic liturgies are of great value as illustrations of the way in which, through centuries of experiment, the harmony and relations of the moods of worship have been worked out. These form the necessary backgrounds against which any fresh experiments ought to be made. In discharging so important and vital a function of the church as common worship, neither the minister, chorister nor congregation may be permitted to indulge in personal whims or fashions of the day. The matter is too urgent to permit any trifling.

Manifestly any adequate consideration of the church as the agent of community worship must involve the leader of worship. In the churches which emphasize the sacramental and sacerdotal

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aspects of the church these duties are prescribed and training in the conduct of worship is given with painstaking care. In the non-liturgical, Protestant groups the emphasis upon the work of preaching has doubtless minimized the importance of the minister's service as leader of common worship. The important personal question has been, "Am I prepared to preach?" rather than, "Am I prepared to lead the worship of the congregation?" There are many evidences of such a shift in emphasis as will lead to the inclusion of prayer, Scripture reading, and music with the sermon in the preparation of the minister to conduct worship. The sermon will no longer be the supremely important factor; it will derive its chief value not from its text, proposition, discussion, or delivery, but rather from its organic unity in the service of worship as a whole, preparation for which will be the task of the minister. The prayer will receive the attention that it deserves as the center of the service. "Read" prayers will doubtless be used, both those from the great liturgies and others of the minister's own composition; but he will not take refuge in these as a way of escape from the toil of preparation. Let it be hoped that in the non-liturgical services of worship extemporaneous prayer never will be abandoned. Such is prayer whose content has been prepared with most careful thought, but whose words are those of the hour, when the minister, with uplifted spirit and kindled imagination, pours out in beautiful and impassioned words the needs and yearn-

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ings of the people whom he knows and loves. The Christian minister reaches the highest point in his work and also renders the supreme service to the people when he leads them in their common prayer.

CHAPTER V

THE TEACHER OF THE TRUTHS BY WHICH WE LIVE

TRUTH is such a vast and confusing word! Pilate's cynical question, "What is truth?" never has been answered to the full satisfaction of all inquirers. In spite of this, however, we can make out certain types of truth and can evaluate them.

Scientific truth we recognize clearly as that body of certified knowledge which has been slowly and carefully gathered as a result of diligent research. How much it has cost to obtain this precious substance for common use we do not realize until we read the fascinating story of discovery, from the days when man first turned his inquiring mind to the search for knowledge and wrested it from reluctant nature by vigil and labor. The great laboratories of the modern university are the result of adventure, labor, and sacrifice which can be understood only by tracing their slow development through patient centuries. As one reads, for example, the life of Louis Pasteur this fact becomes clear. Such a book as Slosson's *Creative Chemistry* reveals the debt which everyone owes to scientists. Their work has been heroic and they have made life more

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comfortable, profitable, and beautiful for all the years to come.

The natural treasury for the deposit of this kind of truth is the schools, colleges, and universities, in whose lecture rooms, laboratories, and libraries we expect to find the last report on our knowledge of the universe. We look to the same institutions also to pursue their search and bring into the full light of knowledge even larger areas of the unexplored world. This is the business of the institution which is charged with the guardianship of this practical kind of truth.

Then we recognize truth in the forms in which it is given to us by the philosopher and the poet. Along with the processes of research go the discoveries which are achieved by the imagination and the logical powers of man. Full knowledge of the world never will be furnished us from the laboratory alone. The spirit of man cannot be put into a test tube and its reactions studied like those of physical materials. When the psychological laboratory has done all its work it has merely furnished new and more tractable materials for the philosopher and the poet. When Robertson preached his sermon on "An Obedient Life the Organ of Knowledge" he discussed a realm of truth which is explored by life and not by logic alone. The day of the seer has not passed away. He achieves by a leap the ends toward which the logician and the researcher plod with painful steps and slow. The laboratory product is important; but the poet's findings are also precious

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and useful. The philosopher is still sure of a place in our modern world.

For this most necessary truth we turn to the philosophy, the art, and the literature, which is to be found in books and libraries. We are not accustomed to ask elsewhere for this sort of merchandise; it is kept in stock among the great books. These men of insight and power "rule us from their urns," and we expect that their successors will always be discovering more truth with which to kindle and inspire us.

There is still another kind of truth, which we here describe as the "truth by which we live." It is closely related to that body of profitable practical wisdom contained in the proverbs and axioms of daily life with which we are all familiar. We call it the knowledge that has been reached by "common sense" in the long progress of the race and has been tested and found useful by many an experiment. It is a gift of God to every new generation, which finds it more and more trustworthy because of the judgment that the preceding generation has passed upon it. Life can be constructed confidently upon this kind of truth as a basis. It brings forth the dependable and abiding virtues which make the individual happy and the community a safe place in which to live. This kind of truth has to do with the highest motives which can actuate us in daily life. In 1914 Dr. Richard Cabot published a significant book entitled *What Men Live By*. He enumerated four great sources of happy and useful living:

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work, play, love, and worship. Each of these was treated fully with insight and discrimination. There was little dissent from the proposition that these four at least were among the truths by which we live.

The teacher of these truths has always been, in a paramount degree, the church. Other sources of instruction are to be recognized; the church does not hold the field alone. However, the most prominent and satisfying teacher of these truths by which men live is the church. Here men and women have come confidently for help and have not been denied. The church still stands ready to give instruction on the truths by which we live, with an insight and energy unmatched elsewhere.

What are some of these truths which the church is prepared to give to the modern world? We might take the four presented by Dr. Cabot and find them admirably covered by the message of the church. The real character of work, the genius of play, the power of love, and the rewards of worship are all presented in the light of divine duties, attractive and rewarding by the church. We venture to propose, however, two groups of these truths upon which life may be based, as they are given us by St. Paul.

The first is recorded in Rom. 14:17: "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." This furnishes us a trinity of truths, set in contrast with the merely physical appetites and

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their satisfaction. They are worthy of brief consideration.

Rightness, goodness, is the undergirding quality of all noble living. Without it the individual ceases to be a profitable member of society and the community itself becomes unsafe and tends to destruction. A good man is generally recognized as the principal asset of every social group, and the place in which it is good to live is sought by those who want to live well themselves. Goodness is the greatest single guarantee of the permanence of society in any generation. The righteous nation is the supreme servant of the race in the achievement of its highest ideals. The church always has been the definer and defender of moral ideals and standards. This we shall discuss at length in the following chapter.

Peace is the end of the age-long quest of man. For the individual and for the nations it is an end to be sought with all possible energy and in all possible ways. It does not consist in negative states of withdrawal or freedom from struggle and stress. Peace is something achieved by the imposing of higher laws which reduce the lower conflicts to order. In the case of the individual it is most perfectly illustrated in the earthly life of Jesus. In His experience there were many strains and conflicts; the end was anything but peaceful, in the ordinary sense of the word. Yet a majestic and beautiful composure marked His progress through life; and in the hour of his imminent physical anguish and mental struggle

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He could give his "peace" as a priceless legacy to His friends. He recognized clearly that this was "not as the world giveth." It had been wrought out of the conflicts of an earthly career by the grace of heavenly principles. This is the message of the church to a restless and struggling world. The way of Jesus is the way of peace, for persons and for nations. The voice of the church has not always been heard for peace when the popular frenzy of war has swept over the nations. On the whole, however, the record of the church as the champion of peace deserves profound respect and confidence. It is the greatest single force working to-day to create a world of peace and good will.

Joy is also a truth by which men live. This is something far deeper and richer than amusement or merriment or laughter. It is merited satisfaction in work well done for a noble purpose. Every family gives testimony to the meaning of joy. Sorrow must come sooner or later into every home. It is impossible to have many personalities thrown into intimate contact in family life without occasional clashes of opinion and interest. When, however, children grow up and take useful places in the world; when the hopes and yearnings of parents are rewarded by the love and honor of their boys and girls; then a joy is realized, so rich and true that all the wealth of the world could not buy it and the riches of kings is cheap in comparison. Again, the life of Jesus is the example of this joy. He experienced it, shared it, transmitted it. The Christian religion moves in

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the sphere of joy. We mistake its inner meaning if we interpret it as gloomy or unhappy. An austere church defined the relation of man to God in the simple words "to enjoy Him forever." Religion is a radiant experience. The Christian church interprets life in this way. Indeed, celebration, happy and united, is the very genius of its worship. As Vogt says: "To praise and celebrate life, not merely this good fortune or delivery from that distress, but the memory of all things, the hope of all things, life entire and complete, to praise God and to celebrate His goodness, this is worship."*

At no other source than the church may this high ideal of joy be found. It is described accurately as the happiness that is realized in the Holy Spirit. It is a holy and spiritual and enduring joy.

The second trinity of truths by which we live is defined by St. Paul in 1 Cor. 13:13: "But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

Once more we find ourselves in contact with great creative energies for noble living. Faith is not credulity. It is not the unquestioning acceptance of absurdities as if they were so. Faith recognizes that there are truths that cannot be demonstrated mathematically or proved by the methods of the laboratory. They are none the less true. The being of God, the character of

* Von Ogden Vogt, *Modern Worship*, 1927, p. 7.

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Jesus as the ideal of personal behavior, the immortal life of the individual, the divine value of all persons—these and a score of other truths like them are apprehended by other than the senses and the physical powers. Faith lays hold on these, trusts them as valid, builds life upon them, believing where it cannot prove. Faith of this kind has produced the noblest characters and achieved the most enduring results in the history of the race. And the church is the teacher of faith. In the fellowship of the church faith is still inspired and sustained. The encouragements of faith are still found in the fellowship of the faithful. The church teaches this truth by which men live.

The second of the great Christian qualities grouped by St. Paul is hope, the anchor of the soul, and one of the essentials of victorious living. Hope does not consist in holding stubbornly to delusions. It is not the same as a shallow optimism which insists upon saying, "All's well," however ill all may seem to be. Hope, as it is interpreted by the church, is intelligent. It looks all the facts squarely in the face. It reckons fully and deliberately with all the hazards. It never remits the rigor of its toil because it works in the mood of hope rather than in the spirit of despair. Thus hope comes into our experience bringing a splendid buoyancy which lifts us through shallows and carries us over bars until we come into the deeper waters and thence on to our desired haven. Hope has a marvelous power to kindle enthusiasm and

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sustain activity. Sometimes a single hopeful person will change the whole climate of a family or community. Bringing his courageous hope into play in a critical situation, one such person may suffice to arrest a dangerous drift and bring glorious victory out of impending defeat. This note of hope is always audible in the Christian message. Anyone who is disheartened may turn to the church with confident expectation of help. We shall speak of this more fully in Chapter VIII.

St. Paul affirms that the greatest of the principles which make up the "more excellent way" of gaining the supreme gifts of human experience is love. On this point there can be little to say. Love, understood in the Christian sense of the word, is the power that brings all human life into order and holds it together. Love is the foundation of all blessedness in human relations. In spite of many varieties and forms of expression, its essential meaning is easy to understand. It begins to brood over us before our birth; it is the inmost reality and blessedness of all our earthly journey; it will be the truth of that which awaits us beyond the episode of death. The whole of life, as Browning says, is just the task of learning love. The whole content of the life and work of Jesus is summed up in loving. "Having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end." The gift of the Savior of the world was prompted by the love of God. There are no words to be found which have power fully to declare the

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place and energy of love in human experience. St. Paul simply says it is the greatest of all gifts and graces; this is enough. The message of the church is the evangel of the love of God for the world—love for man at his worst in order that he may become his best through its redemptive power. The church is the one place where love is a reality as the guide of life and the supreme law governing human relations.

Thus, among all the teachers of the race, the church sustains the position of primacy because of the truths that constitute her message. No community can afford to close its schools or its libraries. Far less, if the health of the people is to be safeguarded in the highest way, could it afford to close the churches, the teachers of the truths by which we live.

CHAPTER VI

THE DEFINER AND DEFENDER OF MORAL AND SPIRITUAL STANDARDS

THE study of the period when the Christian religion was assuming its primitive form and finding its expression in the environment of the first and second centuries reveals a complex process of development. To no single factor may the final result be assigned. The influences which shaped the thought, worship, institutions, and ethical standards of the Christian people were varied and at times apparently conflicting. Different authorities stress these with varying emphasis. There seems to be little doubt, however, that the earliest description of the Christian movement as "the way" selects accurately the principal factor which assured its conquest in the Roman world.

This description of the Christian movement is worth a moment of study. The situation is reflected in Acts 9: 1, 2:

And Saul, yet breathing threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way,

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whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

The word "Way" had become so general in usage and precise in content by this time that the translators of the American Standard Version feel justified in beginning it with a capital letter. Much is included in the term. It involved a new way of looking at life, where the center of interest was completely changed from the external to the inner, from law to loyalty, from ceremonies to happy fellowship with Christ. In time it was to become a way of worship and a way of association in the enjoyment of the Christian experience. Principally, however, it was a way of behavior and daily conduct, in private, in the family, and in the community. It was a new set of behavior-acts which issued from a new standard, determined by the teachings and conduct of Jesus. These men and women were followers in the way that had been marked out by His feet as He lived the standard life among men. The other factors in the complex and pregnant word were less clearly discerned at first; this practical, moral, everyday meaning could be understood by the most simple-minded observer.

The records reveal the fact that the Way won its victories at the beginning by the sheer weight of its moral energy as men and women who were mastered by the teachings and motives of Jesus made them into a practical code of moral conduct and standard of daily behavior. The creeds,

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the worship, the institutional organization, all were necessary; but the power and beauty of the moral standards and achievements of the Christian people commanded to a paramount degree the respect and finally the allegiance of a world which was sick from moral failure and ethical confusion. The function of the church from the beginning, therefore, has been defined in the field of moral definition and enduement. This is also one of its credentials as it faces the modern world, confused in respect to its standards and far from perfect in moral achievement.

It is hardly necessary to discuss the relationship between religion and morality or to assure anyone who fears that "the gospel" is in danger of becoming only a system of ethical ideals and precepts for the guidance of the moral life. If there were sufficient warrants to justify this fear, it would indeed be ominous. If the gospel as a message were to be transformed into a system of ethics with no religious sanction behind it we would be headed straight for another form of legalism, which would produce another school of scribes and Pharisees. The evils against which Jesus protested would be upon us in worse manifestations. The gospel in the form of ethical idealism alone would be shorn of its uniqueness and vacated of its creative power. The sermon as merely a series of exhortations to practice the Christian virtues would lose its uniqueness and force. The minister is more than the chaplain of an association devoted to ethical culture. Those who see

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in certain tendencies in the church to-day a drift toward an exclusively moral emphasis in the Christian message and program are loud and stern in their protest. The majority of the arguments used in this debate are men of straw. In the field of practical life there are no such collisions between the Christian religion and ethics as are often described by those who are thus voicing their protest. Creeds and conduct are interrelated both as cause and effect. Salvation is neither *without* nor *by* character. The gospel as a spiritual message issues in the gospel as a practical achievement. The Christian experience is the primary source of the Christian theology and the creed in turn becomes valid as it inspires and vitalizes a deeper experience in practical life and conduct.

The church, therefore, has been the primary source of those standards which undergird the moral life of the community and guarantee the ethical and spiritual health of mankind. This was clearly the idea of Jesus in the three striking analogies which He used to describe the influence of His followers in the world. They were to be like salt, light, and yeast.

"Ye are the salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13).

"Ye are the light of the world. Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14, 16).

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened" (Matt. 13:33).

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These familiar figures have at least this one element in common: they are necessary to the health and permanence of life. The salt preserves from decay and adds flavor and taste to food; the light reveals and sustains with creative energy the whole physical universe; and the yeast is a source of vital force for that within which it works. It is easy to find the facts which match these analogies in the purpose and activity of the church in modern society.

The moral message of the church is a tremendous power in individual life preventing decay and preserving moral health. The inevitable tendency to seek low levels or to stagnate in the fens of evil habit is recognized by everyone who frankly faces the movement of his own life or of the social groups to which he belongs. Unless there is constant endeavor to check this drift and to preserve the best from the influence of the worst the moral improvement of the race is impossible. At this point the church appears as salt, with its affirmation of the healthful, saving ethics of Jesus' way of living. Every individual and community needs this tonic infusion of cleansing ideals and standards to save it from decay. The church is our chief moral agency to do this business.

Life tends also to become stale and flat through the monotony of routine. The day's work becomes commonplace and loses its zest and tang. The colors fade out and a universal drab covers the landscape. The moral inspiration and guidance of the church appears at this point of need. The

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standards of Jesus always add a factor of freshness and surprise to common life. They reveal higher attitudes dominating monotonous levels; they dash with fresh colors the faded reaches of average life and work. The Christian preacher discovers romantic factors in his message and casts new charm upon the day's work. Goodness is discovered to taste good. The law of love is found to be the best seasoning for three meals a day. The Christian ethic is the salt of life.

We pass now to the vivid figure of light, which Jesus uses in reference to His own character and work, and which Phillips Brooks set forth with clear discernment in his sermon, "The Light of the World." Then Jesus carried the same analogy over into the definition of the moral significance of the daily life of His friends, who were commanded to live in the public eye the life of fearless moral adventure, that men might see their "good works" and thereby be led to give glory to God. This analogy also deserves analysis and study.

The human scene tends to become dull and obscure. We see the trees but miss the forest. Fog and darkness invade and our little lamps light so small a part of our world! Then the church comes like the sunlight to reveal the larger meaning of the world in which each man lives and works, like the morning sun with its power to disclose that which actually lies in field and forest. The gospel clarifies life and sets its details into right relation and perspective. Anyone who sees life in the light

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of Jesus discovers new worlds, like Columbus on that day when he saw for the first time the substance of his dream from the deck of his little ship.

The power of light to sustain life is its essential function. Were the sun's energy withdrawn our world of animate nature would perish. This is a truism which needs only to be stated in order to have its analogy in the moral and spiritual areas revealed. Therefore when Jesus described His disciples as the light of the world, He was saying in the simplest way possible that they are the primary source of sustaining energy for human society. This means that the church comes to the modern world with the most convincing of credentials. It is the supreme energy furnishing the ideals that define a happy, useful, and abiding moral order. It assures the well-being of the community. Within the shadow of the lifted spires of the church human life comes to its highest expression. Childhood is safeguarded; youth is educated and inspired; homes are made happier; industry is made more careful of human values; justice and peace are more fully guaranteed. This is the ceaseless service of the church to the people.

When New England was desperately stricken by a flood the call for yeast was so great that airplanes were sent to carry it to the farms and villages. The very existence of family life depended on securing yeast. This is a vivid illustration of the necessity of an apparently

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simple factor in domestic economy and it brings home to our minds the function of the church in human society as the giver of the vital contacts which are essential in the conduct of human relations. The church possesses the means whereby communities are vitalized. The church in the community is like the yeast in the dough, spreading to its farthest confines the energy of life-giving ideals and principles.

The figure may not be pressed too far; but at least these details are borne out in an evaluation of the work of the church. Its influence and power are spread abroad through the silent, ceaseless impact of life upon life. In the words of the familiar slogan these energies of religion "cannot be taught; they must be caught." The moral ideals and energies of the church are passed on from life to life in the contacts of friendly and daily experience. The publishing of the message of the church is not primarily through the printed page or the spoken sermon, but by the "living epistle" of Christian example and potent personal influence in the contacts of home, business, and society. The presence of any Christian in a situation of any sort is, or should be, the presence of a vital, quickening energy working in countless subtle ways for the moral and spiritual change of the group to higher levels and nobler standards.

It must be admitted that this is a definition of what ought to be rather than an accurate description of what actually is. The church fails in measuring up to this high privilege of being

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the salt, the light, and the yeast of the community. In every case where any ideal is brought up to the rigid demand of perfect performance a similar limitation will almost always be discovered. This involves no repudiation of the ideal but only the honest confession of imperfect achievement, as the reach always exceeds the grasp. Tested, however, in comparison with the success of endeavors to express ideals in education, politics, and social organization (the race problem, for example), the success of the church is gratifying and its failures are no warrant for despair.

The moral motivation of the community is not exclusively in the hands of the church. The influence of the home is constant; the school shares in the responsibility; all service clubs and groups organized for philanthropic purposes are partners in the task. The church, however, bears the primary responsibility for defining the standards of the good life. Ethical ideals are an integral part of its program of religious education. The worship of the congregation creates the attitude of right living, at least indirectly, and the sermon is often directly a means by which moral motives are given precision and force. Therefore, since the moral health of the people is the prime interest of the community, the institution which ministers most directly to it deserves the support and confidence of right-minded citizens. Members and officers of Christian churches are justified in presenting the institution to the community for support as a principal and

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powerful moral asset of the people. The church is not a parasite; it is a functioning member of the social organism. Its business does not lie on the margin but at the center of the community's life. In all confidence the church may claim the support of the people because of its message and mission to the moral life of mankind.

The place and function of the church in the modern world as the definer of those standards to which the highest spiritual endeavors of the race must conform require only brief space for statement. Life in physical and moral relations is well understood, for it presses upon us in every conscious moment. We are aware, however, of higher relations and duties, which we group under the general name of "spiritual." They are the very substance and reality of existence. The demand for daily bread we must meet. The call of the right life we must answer. The profounder reality of the spiritual universe, with God in Christ as its center and His will as its law, we must recognize as the supreme fact. We are citizens of two worlds, the earthly and the heavenly; and complete living is the result of adjustment to both of these.

Perhaps the most urgent problem pressing upon the modern man is this: Is this universe a vast mechanism, governed by natural law, and sufficient to itself; or is it governed by a personal God, with whom we have fellowship and in whose will is our peace? Many subjects of debate which have been thrust upon our attention since

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the close of the great war really possess only accidental value and lie quite on the margin of vital interest in comparison with this question of the spiritual content and relationships of the universe.

The church never has failed to speak clearly and positively on this point. Full in the face of all doubt it has flung its glorious doctrine of the Kingdom of God. The ultimate content of the universe is an expression of the will of its divine Creator. The world-view of the great prophets and the working theology of Jesus are united in the message of the church to the modern world. A man's life is not a short-spanned struggle for bread in the midst of a mechanism that will finally give him no more value than the surviving bit that remains from the slow, dreaming life of the dead worker in the coral reef. The life of every individual in its mortal span between the two eternities is a glorious spiritual adventure in commerce with a Father God and in fellowship with a living Christ. He is not a bubble breaking back into the wave in mid-ocean after a moment's manifestation in foam and fury. He is a son of God and a comrade of Christ, set here in the walks of time to validate his birthright as a child of eternity.

Surely the community which is mindful of its own spiritual health must sustain the messenger of this truth. The economic situation is so intense and grim! It would grind us to powder if left unmodified by the spiritual interpretation of

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life which compensates for its severity and alone makes it tolerable. The church furnishes this relieving and stimulating vision. It defines another universe and gives man his royal place at its center as the child of God.

The function and energy of the church are not limited to the definition of ideals. Out of the churches come the resources in respect to personal leadership and financial gifts which make possible the realization of those ideals in movements and programs of every kind designed for the welfare of humanity. The great institutions working to-day for the benefit of mankind, hospitals, charities, social settlements, associations for community betterment, find their leaders, in the vast majority of cases, among the men and women whose childhood and youth were under the molding touch of the church. Ideals of service, the sense of personal responsibility for the well-being of others, the spirit of sacrifice, have been exalted in the teaching of the church and are being carried out at the present moment in the personal leadership of institutions of mercy and help in every land. A study of such a beneficent institution as the Near East Relief validates this proposition. The honor roll of those who have served this organization, many of whom have laid down their lives in the discharge of their duties, is composed chiefly of workers whose ideals were given to them in and through the church.

An examination of the sources of financial support reveals the same fact. In estimating the

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revenues of a certain great charity whose benevolent service admits of no doubt, and which is in no sense ecclesiastical, the Chairman of the Finance Board said: "It is to the church people that we always turn with complete confidence for gifts to sustain our work; and a conservative estimate that eighty per cent. of our annual revenues are derived from church resources would be warranted." Those who know the problem of securing financial support for all kinds of philanthropic agencies confirm this judgment. The benevolent gifts of church members never are confined to their own institutions. The extra-ecclesiastical donations outrun those given to the support of the church in practically every case. The whole teaching and influence of the church operates directly for the increase of gifts to all kinds of worthy causes which lie outside the specific program of the institution itself.

Without men and money the vast system of modern benevolent institutions would utterly fail. Something has to keep the springs of supply open and running bank full. The influence of the church is the greatest single energy now operating to furnish leadership and money for sustaining modern agencies of philanthropy around the world. The church seldom appeals for the recognition of this fact; but the truth ought to be recognized and honor ought to be given where honor is due.

CHAPTER VII

THE SOURCE OF MORAL AND SPIRITUAL POWER

THE church defines the Christian ideal and therefore holds up the fair outlines of the good life. Then it proceeds to do something more. It furnishes the moral and spiritual power by which the ideal thus defined may be practically achieved. This is the work of enduement, which follows definition.

At the first glance we are met by the grim fact that many of those who are members of the church and have received the influence of its teaching seem to be lacking in moral and spiritual power; at least they do not give a wholly satisfactory account of themselves when they meet the test of the community at the point of their practical performance. To deny this would be both false and futile. There is still something more to be said, however. In any case of moral or spiritual failure we have not gone to the roots of the matter until we know, not simply how poor the performance may be, but how much poorer it might have been if the person who failed had not been instructed and empowered at least as far as he was. Granted that the level of achievement was not high, it might have been

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much lower. The fact that it was not lower may be due to the influence of the church, which, to the extent of its influence, deserves the credit.

There is no doubt, however, to one who considers the matter fairly, that those who share the fellowship of the church do receive in that relationship an increment of power which is an actual factor in their moral and spiritual achievement. Sometimes church members fail, but, generally speaking, they come off victorious in moral and spiritual struggles and that by means of the power which they receive in and through the church.

This is due, most obviously, to the gift of power through fellowship with those comrades of kindred purpose who are united in the Christian quest. The influence of the group upon the individual is too well established to require any discussion at this point. The psychology of the crowd in reference to the single member of the crowd has been profoundly studied and will become still more thoroughly understood. It calls for only a moment's reflection upon our own experience to show how we act as members of groups with a resourcefulness and energy which we would be unable to express if called upon to act alone. Not only the enthusiasm but something of the collective power of the group is imparted to each member of it under the spell of united action. Under the influence of a national appeal the individual patriot acts with courage and energy which are called forth by the social situation in which he finds himself.

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The most conspicuous example of the power of the group to energize and sustain the individual is seen in the almost superhuman acts of the soldier under the thrill of battle. Military history is full of the records of the results, in point of daring and victory, which appear when the latent resourcefulness and courage of an apparently timid and even cowardly soldier are evoked by a situation in which he suddenly discovers that the doing of some particular deed, which, faced alone, would have shot him through with dread, depends upon him. Many of the most dramatic records and moving picture scenarios are founded upon this experience.

The study of team play in athletic sports brings out the same principle. The individual player catches fire from the group situation in which he finds himself. The honor of alma mater depends upon him. He runs or leaps as he never could have done if he were not stimulated to unexpected achievement by nothing less than the inspiration of the group. The inferiority complex that had inhibited him is suddenly shattered. The fear obsession that had crippled him is broken. Suddenly he knows that he is able to do what had seemed impossible before. Like the rowers in the boat-race described in Virgil's *Aeneid*, "They can because they think they can." A great assurance is born in a moment out of the "dear love of comrades," and men are nerved to achievement by the power of the group.

This same condition is found in the practical

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relations of church fellowship. The group is confessedly committed to seeking practical expressions of the ideals of Jesus in daily life. There is no secret about this; it is of the very nature of the fellowship. The influence of this common public commitment of the group to a moral and spiritual purpose bears directly upon every member of it. There is something like the pressure of the atmosphere in the matter. We are not aware of it and yet we are responsive to it. It enters ceaselessly and silently into the very character of our life. We act in accord with the pressure. The result of any changes in its strain is immediately reported in the practical behavior of those who are sensitive to it. This is one of the most significant facts about our relations in the fellowship of the church. The standards and ideals of the group constantly tend to pull the individual to higher levels and to hold him there.

The church, however, represents something more than the present fellowship of those who are disciples of Jesus in His way of the good life. In the church is garnered the continuous experience of unnumbered men and women during almost two thousand years of practical experiment with the Christian ideal as a rule of daily life. They have passed from the human scene; but they live in the fellowship of the church. It requires a sensitive spirit and a kindled imagination to become aware of this truth and to enter into it gracious ministry. This is something more

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than a bit of rhetoric. This truth undergirds any phase of the doctrine of apostolic succession. It is the truth that underlies the practical counsel of the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, "Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith" (12:1,2). This invisible fellowship is an energizing reality. It is a source of power for the good life. It imparts something which empowers and sustains us as we seek to live among our fellow men day by day. In the church, whether it be in the quietness of the hour of worship or in the happy contacts of human friendships, we may feel that somehow there lie about us the gracious influences of the comrades of Jesus during the past. It is an inheritance into which we may enter confidently. It gives us new consciousness of power.

This experience has found expression in certain of our most beautiful and soul-satisfying hymns. One of these, perhaps the most familiar, is sung by the Christian people as an expression of praise for the fellowship of the blessed dead and of prayer for the strength that derives from their presence and influence.

For all the saints who from their labors rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest. Alleluia!

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Thou wast their rock, their fortress and their might;
Thou, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight;
Thou, in the darkness drear, their light of light. Alleluia!

Oh, may Thy soldiers, faithful, true, and bold,
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,
And win, with them, the victor's crown of gold. Alleluia!

Oh, blest communion, fellowship divine!
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine. Alleluia!

And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,
Steals on the ear the distant triumph-song,
And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong. Alleluia!

This hymn grows out of practical experience and finds its full warrant in the empowering of living men "by the might of men undying." It is not a bit of poetry unsanctioned by experience. It welled forth out of human struggle and warfare, fierce and long, an attestation by worn and victorious warriors to the power of the church invisible to turn defeat into victory.

The church is the place, also, in which the energies of God break through to furnish adequate power to the struggling spirit caught in the mesh of temptation and sin. Our present comrades can help us and the great cloud of witnesses can bring us confidence and help; God supremely is on our side in our moral and spiritual struggle. When we become sure of this we have taken the first long step toward the assurance of victory. God does not leave us to fight our battles without His help. "One with God is a majority." It is not

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always easy to be sure of this. The divine aid sometimes seems to be withheld so long! The sea is so wide and our little boat is so small! It is a triumph of faith when finally we are sure that this is a moral universe and that God is on the side of the individual in his particular conflict as well as in the cosmic purpose of creation. The one place where we become most fully assured of this is in the church.

This assurance is an integral part of the good news that the Christian Church brings to the world. The gospel is a manifold message, an evangel to the whole experience of mankind. It is for the everyday life of now as well as for the everlasting life of all the soul's tomorrows. The gospel is not only an exhortation to seek the good life in Jesus' way but it is an effective promise that God will assure the success of it through the gift of divine power. "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me." This truth is taught in the church school; it becomes a promise in the Christian sermon; it is a principal factor in all forms of parish ministry. It is emblazoned on the banners of the militant church, whose cross has been transfigured from a sign of shame into a symbol of triumph. *In hoc signo vinces.* So the church becomes the one place in which and by which we are assured that God is on our side and that energies from outside ourselves will surely break through to furnish the resources which will complement our own in every moral and spiritual combat.

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The literature of the Christian people furnishes the full confirmation of this truth. It is a glorious record of human conquest by divine help. A single concrete example is the *Pilgrim's Progress* of John Bunyan. The theology of the immortal tinker may not be that of his modern reader; but their struggle is the same and the source to which each looks for help is identical. It is God in the struggle that matters. The divine reinforcements are what count in the crisis. The battle may seem for the moment to be going against the lonely warrior; but not when the contestants reckon with God. There is no final defeat for the soul that is leagued with God in the moral and spiritual combats of life. The church is a field of struggle; but it is the one area of certain victory.

Within recent years we have been furnished with a new body of material bearing on this point, chiefly from the human documents of the Salvation Army, put into literary form by Mr. Harold Begbie. His significant books, *Twice-born Men*, *Souls in Action*, and *More Twice-born Men* reveal with new clearness the practical value of this principle of the influence of the group upon the individual. The Salvation Army has developed its technique in dealing with converts out of concrete experience with the most difficult of cases. One of these, as reported in *Twice-born Men*, was known at the "Puncher." He had passed through a revolutionary experience and had won his battle with intoxicating liquor. One day,

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however, the temptation became too great and he fell. The consequences are given in the writer's own words:

The Puncher was still drunk when he arrived back in his own neighbourhood. People seeing him stagger through the streets did not laugh nor mock; they were genuinely sorry—even the worst of them—to see this great-hearted man fallen back into ruin. A kind of silence held the crowded streets as the Puncher with sunk head and giving legs shambled to his home, a terrible look in his eyes and jaws.

Then the tongues wagged. In a few minutes all the neighbourhood knew that the Puncher's conversion had not lasted. People talked of nothing else. They wondered if he had already wrecked his home and smashed his wife. Some of them slouched round to his street and hung about in front of his house. A crowd assembled.

The door opened. The Puncher came out. He had taken off his coat, and had put on the red jersey. He walked straight to the Army Hall, went to the penitent form, and prayed.

That was a brave thing to do. But the Puncher does not see the courage of it. One thought stuck in his mind when he came to himself, drunk, ruined, and alone in that public-house in the North of London: the thought that he would be safe if he could get into his uniform. It was not the honour of the regiment he thought about, but the covering protection of the Flag. He went to his uniform for protection. This is a true story, and it seems to me there is nothing more remarkable in the narrative than the poor beaten fellow's fixed idea that if only he could get into his jersey he would be safe.

The "covering" power of the red jersey was adequate in the emergency. It became a symbol

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of the panoply of God. It assured the man in the moment when he seemed to be vanquished that the everlasting arms of eternal love were beneath him. He never fell again after that experience. The fellowship stood around him and he walked the straight pathway in the energy that came from God through them.

Every minister can bring a wealth of similar testimony to confirm the same point. This system "works." Alone and fending for himself the tempted individual is defeated. Within the compass of the church's fellowship, the same person feels the tides of strength come in and in the end he wins his battle gloriously. The church has furnished the situation in which divine power can break through.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GIVER OF COMFORT AND COURAGE

SINCE the outbreak of the great war in 1914 the world has experienced such sorrow and suffering as makes us aware with poignant vividness how much we need comfort and courage. The problem of suffering presses upon anyone who is seeking to find a reasonable interpretation of the universe. To justify "the strange ways of God to men," to furnish a valid theodicy for this modern age, is a task of exceeding importance and difficulty. If it is being undertaken anywhere with any hope of success it is through the ministry of the Christian church to the sorrows and discouragements of the community.

The reality of this experience needs no discussion. There is more health than sickness in the community, more joy than sorrow, more life than death. Nevertheless, sooner or later, in some degree, suffering and failure enter into every life, and the supreme experience of death, bringing the disruption of the dearest human ties, comes to every group and to every person. The majority of people, especially in America, live happily and fairly prosperously, giving little thought to sorrow and death, and seldom considering that these

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sometime must be encountered in all their grim reality. They do not wish to be reminded of the inevitable struggle that is ahead of them nor is it desirable to make constant reference to it; but they do need to know where the sources of comfort and courage lie when their hearts are overwhelmed and they must find help. They will discover this assistance most quickly and surely when they have all the time been undergirding their experience with the great Christian convictions. If this has not been the case, then they ought to know where help may be had from sources outside themselves.

There is still another aspect of community life which should be surveyed at this point. Suffering and death are more intense and dramatic expressions of the facts that tend to unnerve and dishearten everyone at some time; the long struggle for economic support and a place in competitive society press with dismaying intensity upon almost everyone almost all the time. As it has been put, it's hard work just to live. Until one knows the community intimately the range and intensity of this struggle is hardly recognized. It lies, however, at the center of almost every personal and domestic problem. There is half a truth at least in the saying, "Man is what he eats"; that fragmentary truth is packed full of disheartening reality in countless cases. At first glance we think of the mission of religion as bringing comfort in the event of sickness and death; but the power of religion to furnish courage

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and high aims in the daily struggle for bread and status is even greater and more needed. This conception of the work of the church needs wider recognition and more perfect realization. Religion and the church have been charged with endeavoring to furnish anodynes for those caught in the pressure of economic stress, lulling the just complaints of those suffering oppression by the sweet songs of rewards after death to compensate for the loss of fair treatment in the mine and factory. The words of John the Baptizer to the soldiers, "and be content with your wages" (Luke 3:14), have been cited as defining the attitude of the church in the relentless quest for economic justice. Those who do this forget the mighty message of the Hebrew prophets and the spirit and teachings of Jesus, which are the real definition of the church's attitude in this prolonged and difficult effort to bring a better day into the economic order. The church as the spokesman of religion does have something to say in this matter. It speaks in no uncertain voice concerning the joy of work, the dignity of labor, the inexorable demand for justice, and the permeation of all economic relationships by the spirit of good will and brotherhood, until warfare shall cease and coöperation shall reign. The church must be the giver of comfort and courage to all workers with brain or hand and must embrace the economic field fully within the compass of its ministry.

There are various places in which men and women seek relief and courage when they find

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themselves caught in situations that are distressing. The man who said that three drinks of whiskey is the shortest road out of Packingtown and therefore he took it, pointed out one of the most common ways of escape from disheartening conditions. The means and places of intoxication will doubtless always be sought in the vain effort to find courage. The folly and futility of this method requires no time for discussion. The result of this experiment is perfectly well known.

Another effort to find help for the disheartened soul leads to the experiment with pleasure. If there is tragedy in domestic life and the economic struggle is grim and relentless, at least the pictures on the screen in the brilliant theater display the final triumph of the right and at the end there is always the reward for the fearless fighter. And so, for this among many other reasons, no doubt, the long lines stand at the doors of the playhouses. There may be sources of comfort and courage in the patent lessons of the film; but they are too artificial to be permanently satisfactory. The pain and the problem come back again.

Often men and women turn to the comfort of the poem and the encouragement to be had from the great literature of power. We are not thinking here of the vanity of the modern problem novel with its hopeless triangle of suicide or compromise; the futility of this source is too apparent to require anything more than a passing reference. The great dramatists, poets, and

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writers of romance have grappled with the questions of sin and death. *The Servant in the House* moves one mightily to believe in the final worth of the lowly and the triumph of love over selfishness. The answer of Tennyson to the problem raised in his very soul by the death of Arthur Hallam has served many a man as a cup of strength in the great hour of his agony. The power of the good deed as it works out through the intricate story of *Les Misérables* is enough to reinforce the flagging energies of anyone who is seeking the sources of courage.

There is, however, a more satisfactory source of comfort and courage than this and men always have gone to it without being disappointed. When the stimulus has spent itself, when the spell of the silver screen has passed away, when even the answer of the poet and seer has proven inadequate, there remains the message and assurance of the Christian religion, the personal influence of the minister. What are some of these available sources of help?

The Christian religion is a message of courage. In the experience of Israel, out of which it grew, lie the great assurances of the divine encouragement. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people" (Isa. 40:1) was the command to the prophet. Back of every rebuke of sin lay an assurance of pardon. The heart of the Father God was merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in loving kindness. This message comes to its complete expression in the teaching of Jesus, which is rein-

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forced at this point, as it is everywhere else, by the way in which He confirmed His principles by His conduct. "I am the resurrection and the life." "Because I live, ye shall live also." No evil or injustice that men did to Him ever caused His confidence to waver for a single moment. This assurance the Christian minister, as a man of God, has always reaffirmed, in the hospital, in the house of sorrow, and beside the open gash in the soil of God's acre, where men have longed for some promise on which they could joyfully rely in their hours of darkness and bitter grief. The church is the one agency through which the fear of death is done away and men who otherwise would have been subject to bondage are emancipated by hope.

What has the church to offer in the way of courage and comfort to those who are caught in disheartening economic situations? Among other assurances, a conception of daily work as the means by which the will of God is done, and consequently as worthy of the best effort that can be put forth. In other words the church has the only conception of daily work which keeps it from becoming drudgery. For the difference between monotonous drudgery and happy labor lies precisely at the point where a worthy purpose is fused into the daily task so that it is seen to contribute to the attainment of ideal ends. And the Christian conception of the day's work lifts it from the rut and round of the commonplace and reveals its intrinsic worth as part of the plan and

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purpose of God. When Jesus said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to accomplish His work" (John 4:34), He was not confining His interpretation to a unique and divine task of His own, but was expressing the true Christian view of every man's daily work.

Then the church comes into discouraging situations with its message of the meaning of love and self-sacrifice. The church dares to risk everything on the mighty power of love to conquer every adverse circumstance and in the end to bring victory out of defeat and joy out of sorrow. This is not done in any spirit of shallow optimism. Love never blinds its eyes to reality or seeks to treat as non-existent the manifest evils of life. It fully recognizes the intensity of the struggle with real obstacles and then dares to stake its confidence of victory upon the power of love and self-sacrifice to bring good out of evil. This involves a greater test of faith than the confession of faith in the most difficult creeds. To believe that love cannot be defeated means trust in dark days and hope in grave experiences. This is the message of the church and it bears the encouragement that is sorely needed home to the heart of otherwise disheartened individuals and groups.

Now how important is it that the community should have a place where these great encouragements may be found? We commonly estimate the assets of a community in the terms of its physical advantages, its economic opportunities, its intellectual facilities, and its moral standards. All

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these are important in the final appraisal. No one would care to choose for his home a community which was seriously deficient at any of these points. There is something more needed, however, to make a community desirable. When the profoundest and most testing experiences of life must be met we want to be sure that the sources of help are available. The factories, the country club, the school cannot supply them. The church alone is equipped to stand by us in such lonely and desperate hours. There it stands, declaring in no uncertain terms its ancient message of hope and courage. No community which seeks to be equipped with all the essential resources to match all human needs can afford to fail in supplying itself with the church. Thus only will it assure those who suffer and struggle that there is abundant ground for courage to carry on when all the world seems filled with sorrow and despair. Some index finger must point the confused mind and groping spirit to the place where the shining light will break through the clouds of sorrow. Some clear and certain voice must be heard affirming the deathless hope when death has apparently conquered in the human struggle. There is such a resource at hand; it is the church, comforter and heartener when life has seemed to do its worst to us.

CHAPTER IX

THE FIELD FOR THE PERFECTING OF INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE

It is impossible to perfect the individual experience of religion apart from the groups with which we are associated in the contacts of daily life. No person ever becomes his best or all that he ought to be in isolation from others. This is the universal law of life; and it is peculiarly true in the sphere of religion. The Christian experience cannot be graphically represented by a straight line linking the individual to God. The human relations must be included. Therefore it may not be represented by anything less than a triangle, with the three points touching one's self, one's fellows, and God. From the individualization of infancy through the finally consummated process of socialization, we are always seeking new human relations, in and by means of which we are enabled to perfect our own personality. This is the meaning of the significant words of Jesus, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself" (John 17:19). The word here translated "sanctify" means to make whole or complete. No perfection for the good of others can be attained apart from others. The closest of human

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associations is necessary in order that the largest measure of service to others may be thus rendered. The church therefore becomes the necessary field in which the experiences of religion are to be perfected by the individual.

The church is able for many reasons to render this essential service to the individual seeking to perfect his own experience.

In order that we may perfect any kind of individual experience we require the association and stimulus of those who are seeking the same ends and are guided by the same motives. A familiar example is the quest of education. It is futile to seek the development of the individual mental powers apart from the quickening influences of those who are also engaged in the task of seeking truth and bringing into new activity the powers of the mind. The stimulating influence of the group is essential, except in cases so rare that they do not invalidate the law. The ideal of Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a boy on the other is a group, not a solitary struggle of the lonely boy for an education. And it would have been far better if Mark Hopkins could have been represented to us with two boys instead of one on the log. As a matter of fact, the greatest gains in the educational scheme are derived from the collision of minds bent on the same high pursuits. Out of the discussion method and the contributions of fellow-students come the most precious and enduring results of education.

In the experiences of religion the same law

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obtains. The technique of the laboratory and the classroom is different; but this does not amend the common fact that we must have the constant stimulation of those who are like-minded in the quest of the religious life in order to perfect our own experience. Each day brings some new gift of insight or practical experiment; and this ought to be shared for the common good. It is profitable for both those who give and those who receive. In certain cases there may be great differences of experience and interpretation. This gives all the more warrant for sharing them, in order that no stereotyped forms may be considered as final or universal. So the fellowship of those who are like-minded and yet preserve their own sense of truth, sharing it with those who may not see eye to eye, is furnished by the church to all its members.

Then the program of the church affords varied activities by means of which the individual perfects his own life. Religion is a power to be exercised in the relations of human living. The experience which we call Christian must be perfected in intimate union with others in the shared life. The Christian religion cannot be fully realized or expressed in solitary reflection. Perhaps we are in danger that we shall become so intent on doing many things that we shall neglect the reflection and meditation which are also necessary for the fully developed life. For this the church provides in its worship and its emphasis upon the devout life. Action, however, is also

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essential. The individual cannot lay out for himself alone a program of activities which will release the energies of religion in his case and insure the development of his powers by means of their exercise. Such a program calls for the combined insight and skill of the group. From the beginning the church has interpreted its task in the terms of a vast project, the greatest that ever has challenged the imagination and service of men. The church dares to undertake the transformation of the world until all its kingdoms shall become those of Christ the Lord. The vast designs of an Alexander are trivial in comparison with this. The failure to respond to the splendor of the program of the church must be caused by the inability to see how world-wide and superb it is.

The perfection of individual experience calls for just this fascination and quickening. The results of grasping any new vision of the range and the results of the Christian ideal is to give the individual a firmer grasp upon the worth of his own life in reference to the greatest program that ever has claimed the loyalty and service of men. No one can be satisfied to define his own life and work in the terms of the transient and the small. Here, therefore, is the opportunity to measure life against the vast and beneficent meaning of the Christian program for the world. The ideal of the Kingdom of God, as it is described in the teachings of Jesus and in His own effort to invest Himself in its realization, is the most

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effective way in which to ransom oneself from all small and passing conceptions of the meaning of life, and to meet a claim upon one's loyalty and service which commands all the best that the individual can possibly give to it. An honest coming to grips with the full meaning of this vast design may send the individual to the ends of the earth, as it has done so often; but whether it does this or not, it cannot leave one unmoved by the visions that disturb contentment, and it cannot fail to impart the sense of range and dignity which are necessary to any satisfactory interpretation of personality.

A third function of the church in relation to the perfection of individual experience is to furnish a body of concepts which may be validated in practical life. These are acquired in fellowship with like-minded comrades and in response to the program of the church. They undergird the thought and action of the individual as he makes them his own, for "no truth is really ours until we have earned it."

There are at least three great groups of concepts which the church is prepared to furnish to the individual. Many others will occur to anyone who thinks through the teachings of the church as they have been experienced, however loose or intimate the relations have been. The reality and worth of at least these three are surely apparent.

The first is the truth concerning one's own personal value, the meaning of individual life and

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labor. According to the Christian view each individual is a child of God, not a machine, not a total of behavior acts. Every person is something which we name the soul or the spirit, something divine and immortal, something empowered to realize through a human body a purpose of which it is conscious and which it deliberately undertakes to accomplish. Into the reckoning comes a supreme episode to which the name "death" is given, but which is not accepted or construed as the end of the soul's purposeful action but rather as its release into a realm of more abundant love and work. The tragedy of sin and the meaning of salvation both derive from this religious concept of the immortal value of personality. If havoc is wrought upon something so precious, then that which impairs it is inimical to the highest ends and values of life. And that which preserves or saves it into the more perfect realization of its divine purpose is of supreme value. Our behavior will be determined by the estimate which we put upon the worth of our own personality. And our treatment of others depends also upon the same conception. If our fellow-men are only the bubbles breaking upon the crest of the waves, then the way we treat them is of no importance. The working basis of life thus depends upon the estimate we place upon our nature and worth.

The second concept which the church furnishes is that of God. Granted that this changes, as it must change with the growth of knowledge, and that it is repugnant to the temperament and

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thinking of any selfish or base individual, the service of the church in this respect is of supreme importance. For the idea of God always has entered into the behavior of the best and noblest human characters with positive and constant energy. It lies in the background with constant control, shaping conduct, affording satisfaction, and producing results of the highest social significance.

The most potent and satisfactory of these varied concepts of God is that which is illustrated in the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. This may be named simply as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is not a definition or a metaphysical discussion. It is a description of God in the terms of the family and of motherhood and fatherhood. More elaborate and technical conceptions have been offered by the church in the past; still others will be framed in the future; but from the time when Jesus taught His friends to address God as "Our Father who art in heaven," and Paul wrote the description just quoted, this has been the simple, beautiful, compelling concept of God presented by the church.

The third factor in the equipment of the individual by the church is what may be described as "the experiment of Jesus with God and the world." History and literature are filled with experiments in the fine art of living, many of them of the utmost beauty, thrilling with heroism and loyalty. The religions of the world, for the

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most part, rest upon experiments of this sort. Judged by its intrinsic beauty, at the time and by its influence upon subsequent human living, the experiment of Jesus is the most significant of all these. It not only produced the "sinless years" of Jesus, but it set influences abroad which have been the most beneficent of which we have any record. Touched and controlled by the power of this experiment, individuals of all times and kinds have been transformed. The mightiest moral and spiritual force abroad in the world to-day is the energy of this experiment of Jesus. It is grounded in an audacious confidence in the power of love to remake the world. Surrender to the love of God is the way to conquer evil and bring a new world into being. The church affirms this as the valid concept for everyone who seeks in the highest way to make life on earth a success. It has not yet been achieved; but so far as there is any hope for the individual or for the race it lies here.

"Jesus made the experiment. The results are not yet all in; the experiment is not completed. The decision still hangs in the balance. But Jesus was experimenting. He was testing a proposition in order to make manifest and pervasive throughout human living that behavior of the universe which is God." *

In fellowship with this group of like-minded comrades, in partnership with this program of

* Wieman, *The Wrestle of Religion with Truth*, 67.

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world-wide service, and under the influence of this body of religious concepts, the individual moves forward into that lonely, mysterious process of completing his own experience. This he must do for himself. No one can do it for him. There is a terrible loneliness in living. There are vast, waste places where we must explore alone. We are, each in his own way, "pilgrims of the lonely road." Up to a certain point those who love us can watch and lead us. Finally comes the bleak and yet fascinating hour when we also must say, "What have I to do with thee?" The best that the church can do is to furnish something in the way of inspiration and technique for the combat; but on the lonely field we win our own victories or suffer our own defeats. How bitter the latter and how glorious the former we cannot tell even to those who love us best. A mother sees her child pass from her guardianship to fight the battle for character, and imagines that she has lost him. To a certain extent this is true. Out there in the darkness he must carry on the midnight wrestle. It is only God and the unseen Comrade who can be with him there. If only he can, in the critical moment, bring up the reserves that have been furnished him by the church he is in possession of the best guarantee of final victory. "The great cloud of witnesses" is around him and the voices from the heights will hearten him; but the fight is his as he wrestles for the only religion worth while, that which becomes finally his by virtue of his own mastery of it.

CHAPTER X

THE BODY OF CHRIST

AMONG all the definitions of the church which have been formulated and fought over, probably none is so clarifying and permanently satisfactory as the simple analogy, used by St. Paul in Eph. 1:23, "the church, which is his body"—that is, what any organism is to the life that informs it, what the physical body of Jesus of Nazareth was to His immortal spirit which used it during the years of His earthly life, that the Christian church is in reference to the Living Christ who becomes constantly incarnate again in and through it.

In attempting to understand the meaning of this analogy we must analyze the thought of body and spirit. Avoiding all discussions in psychology and biology, we proceed at once to the recognized fact that all "living" things are under the control of an energy of some sort that moves them toward certain ends; that, in the case of human beings, this energizing vitality deserves a distinct name, soul or spirit; that probably the most perfect example of the complete use of a mortal body for the purposes of the spirit is the human life of Jesus of Nazareth.

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At least three aspects of the relation between body and spirit are noteworthy.

The first is the diversity of organs in the organism which we call the human body. The more it is studied the greater appears this fascinating variety. From the revelations of the microscope in histology to the disclosures of anatomy in its complete system, the amazing differences of organs becomes evident. Even to the superficial observer this is most striking. Eye and ear, hand and foot, inner organs and external features impress one with wonder and amazement.

This is the first characteristic of the church that appears from its analogy to the body. It is an organism of amazing variety in its membership. It is not for adults, for persons of any particular class or type, for rich or for poor, for saints or for sinners. It is for young and for old, for rich and for poor, for cultured and ignorant, for "all sorts and conditions of men," as these are included in one of the most familiar and satisfactory prayers of the church. It is the "holy catholic church"; which means it is the church universal, for all souls in time and in eternity. Therefore the more widely it embraces all types of personality the better it realizes the ideal of the body of Christ. The church blesses little children as it christens them in consecration; it unites men and women in the covenant of marriage; it enters into the festivals of the home with its hallowing grace; it speaks the last words of comfort and

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assurance in sorrow and death. Other institutions serve human needs for classes or sections; the church includes all human experience from the cradle to the grave and gathers into its inclusive fellowship the blessed dead. Every member can perform his own function in his own place and way. No service is too lowly to be essential and the highest office is dependent upon the smallest. In no other place is it so wholly true that

All are needed by each one;
Nothing is fair or good alone.

But the amazing diversity of the organs is matched by the marvelous unity of the organism of the body. While the heart is beating and the blood is circulating and the food is furnishing new materials for the repair of exhausted tissues, the body as a whole is making effective the behest of the imperial will. This union of countless functions in the realization of a single purpose is even more striking than the variety which we have just noted. To observe this group of organs, moving to one purpose, unified and precise in direction, is one of the most interesting experiments in life. The clever Irishman, who explained his retreat in the battle by saying that all the time his brave heart was saying, "Forward, march!" his cowardly legs were running him to the rear, was interpreting a case of divided personality in vivid and humorous fashion. We all know the intensity of the inner conflict at certain times; but the body acts as a whole under the

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leadership of the purpose that is dominant at the time.

So the church, when it is running true to its real character, acts in a unified way. It gathers up all its varied factors and forces and drives steadily toward the one objective defined for it by its Lord. At times the courageous minister and the more far-seeing members may be saying, "Forward, march!" while a few trustees may be holding back or beating a retreat. In general, however, the unity of the church in pressing forward to carry out the purpose of Christ is apparent and furnishes the great warrant for expecting the triumph of this purpose in the end. This unity of action involves statesman-like vision on the part of the leaders of the church. The tendency in religious activity, as everywhere, is to use the energies and resources of a few members whose ability is known and whose spirit is willing. The result is that those who can do much have more burdens loaded upon their willing shoulders, while those who can do little lose interest and power simply because they are overlooked. The secret of successful church development and leadership lies in the discovery of the power possessed by every member and the mobilization of it all to carry out the great purpose of the church. The "unity of the spirit" ought to issue in the unifying of all the power in the church, of whatever kind it may be. It must be admitted that discord is often apparent, not only in individual congregations but especially between the members of divided

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Christendom. This might not be so glaring a fault if it did not appear on the background of the ideal unity which ought to mark all the activities of the church. Even when this has been admitted, there exists in the church a wonderful cohesion and unity which, when it is more fully realized, will finally bring about the triumph of the Kingdom of God throughout the world.

A third essential factor in the analogy of the body is the relation between it and the resident life or spirit. Each is necessary to the other. The energy of the spirit must be constantly in possession of the body as its instrument. Failure is inevitable if the quickening of the spirit is withdrawn or if the body is not yielded to its control. This process is reciprocal, ceaseless, and essential. Partial atrophy and final death follow the failure either of life and spirit to infuse the whole organism or of every organ to respond to the control of the spirit. This fact is so evident that nothing beyond its mere statement is necessary.

The significance of this relationship in the case of the church is of paramount importance. The failure of the church lies chiefly at this point, so far as it is lacking in discharging its function in the modern world. The church is not wholly possessed by the resident Christ; it is not completely yielded to the control of the divine purpose which was once incarnate in Jesus and is now claiming the church as the body through

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which to express itself once more. There is no greater mystery in this possession of the church by the living Christ than there is in the building up of the rose bush until it comes to its perfect expression in the roses that it bears. There is a point at which biology and botany stop. Then we have to pass on to the "something more" which is compact of mystery and wonder. Precisely the same material elements which composed the rose bush cannot, in the laboratory, be combined into the bush crowned with roses; but give this energy, or whatever it may be, which we call life, the same elements, and out of them in due time it will make a rose bush blooming with beauty. In some way the non-physical forces make the material elements their servants and the organism comes into existence. Reasoning thus from analogy, we define the church as the body which the unseen but real and living Christ now fashions and uses for the accomplishment of His will. Without it Christ could not bring to pass the results which He must always strive to accomplish. He came to earth, according to His own message, to establish the Kingdom of God, the reign of the will of God in all the life of man. This must still be the paramount interest of the Christ who lives forever. He must have the instruments and agents through which this great purpose may be accomplished, for the Kingdom of God will not be imposed by divine fiat or decree. This work is to be done through the living members of the body of Christ, the church. As

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they are united, in all their variety, in the one endeavor to realize the rule of God in all the earth, they appreciate that they are seized upon by the power of Christ. Thus He is still working to save the world, not because He is physically present anywhere by means of a human body, but because He is present in every time and place where the church is carrying out His will. Christ's triumph is thus made contingent upon His possession of a living church.

And the church is equally dependent for its life upon the constant presence of Christ within it, as the human body is dead when the quickening spirit is withdrawn. When the church is energized by the living Christ it defines its aim clearly. There are many pulls of conflicting interest which the church always has felt; and whenever it has been diverted from its one supreme aim, it has suffered and failed. In simple terms, the church on earth is set to do for and with Christ after His death what Christ undertook to do when He lived in Palestine. He never lost the precision of His message or the drive of His mission. Death interrupted it for the moment, after which the Christ, still gloriously alive, rallied His scattered friends, entered spiritually into them, and thus began His greater incarnation. The church in the modern world must always be redefining its message and mission, for this is an age of many and sometimes contradictory appeals. Whenever the church is most clearly conscious of its actual mastery by the

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living Christ it will suffer no confusion concerning its purpose. It will also gain new power. In spite of many distortions this principle is valid: the best warrant for the strong body is to give life and spirit full power over it. We know that we seriously injure ourselves by the inhibitions which we allow to be laid upon the fullest freedom of the spirit. If we let the soul have its way with us we are stronger and happier than we ever can be otherwise. This law obtains also in the relation between the Church and the immanent energizing Christ. If the church is to have power it must give the will of its living Lord full authority over it. The real source of energy for the church does not lie in newer creeds or richer buildings or more effective methods of promotion. It lies rather in a new dedication to the practical effort to make the will of Christ the supreme law of modern living. A more perfect allegiance, a more fundamental surrender, a new yielding to the passion of Christ to save the world—this indicates the way to power by the church which is the body of Christ.

This conception of the church as the body of Christ results in a new evaluation of the realities of individual Christian experience. The organism is made up of many organs. The perfect health and the full functioning of each of these is necessary to the effectiveness of the whole body. When Jesus lived among men in physical manifestation, He expressed His purpose by means of a physical body. He treated it with honor. He never

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allowed it to be broken by a vice or impaired through its use for a base purpose. It could be depended upon for faithful service as He "went about doing good." In the last days of supreme mortal anguish His body did not fail Him. How gloriously He used it! He never mingled in a human situation without leaving it clarified and sweeter. He brought peace into places of discord, love into the field of hate, hope into the surroundings of despair. Tested simply by the standards of human friendship and helpfulness, Jesus made the highest possible use of His body as the instrument of love and blessed human service. Then, in the strength of His young manhood, Jesus was done to death in the most terrible experience of suffering that human cruelty could devise. His physical body succumbed to the racking pain of the cross. No longer could He speak the words of comfort and courage to men enmeshed in the hardship and sorrow of life. No longer could He lay His firm and gentle hands on foreheads burning with fever and limbs eaten by leprosy. No longer could little children climb to the knees of their Friend and hear His blessed words. It was all ended in the shadows of a certain Friday. Jesus had surrendered His body and His work was not yet done.

Then followed an experience the meaning of which is of supreme importance to men to-day. Jesus resumed another body and began another kind of incarnate existence. We may let St. Paul express it as he reported what had happened in

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his own experience. It is most concisely expressed by the single phrase "in Christ," with which the New Testament rings.

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith; the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me (Gal. 2:20).

Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature [or, there is a new creation]: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new (2 Cor. 5:17).

These sincere expressions of St. Paul ought to be taken for their simple worth and meaning, without making any attempt to explain every term in the light of modern psychology. Clearly, this is what he means: the person who has yielded to the spiritual mastery of the living Christ thereby becomes himself another body through which Christ may act now in the world of living men. If He cannot come into a human family or group or situation with His blessed counsel and friendly ministry, I can do this in His stead and therefore in that situation act for Him. If He cannot help the poor man or comfort the discouraged friend, I can do it in His place. If He cannot assure a man who is battling with despair that there is help in God, I can do it for Him and thus He may keep on with His divine ministry. This personal

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value of the great fact is one of the most significant conclusions from the analogy of the body of Christ. Thus Jesus lives again in our modern world as once He lived in Capernaum and among the hills of Palestime. The individual Christian and the living Church incarnate their Christ anew each day until He shall reign, King of kings and Lord of lords.

CHAPTER XI

WHAT THEN OUGHT WE TO DO?

IN the preceding chapters we have studied the credentials of the church, as it stands among the institutions representing the various aspects of human life in the modern community. It cannot exist without the support of those who find in it a practical aid for some of their essential needs as they seek to perfect their personal experience. The church presents a claim made practically and insistently upon every member of the community, which we have sought clearly and fairly to define. It does not affirm that its service is perfect; it admits its frequent failures. It puts forth, however, the fair proposition that those very limitations present a reasonable appeal to its critics to come in and help it to do better rather than to stand outside and make its mistakes more apparent and aggravated by their censure. Those who see the better way are in honor bound by the very fact of their discernment to coöperate with the church positively and practically in the quest for improvement.

There are various attitudes taken to-day by the members of the community in reference to the church.

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The first is to persist in the attitude of critical censure. We insist that this is unfair. Honest criticism is thoroughly justified and the church ought never to resent it. The only appropriate action of the church in response to fair criticism is to take it to heart and try earnestly to remove the grounds that warrant it. The only way to oppose critical opinions is to overcome their force by the radical amendment of abuses. This, we believe, the leaders of the modern church are trying to do. Then, having done their part, so far as that is possible, they have the right to ask the coöperation of their critics in attaining the higher standard.

The second current attitude is to ignore the claim of the church, simply passing it by and side-stepping its validity. This is to occupy a position which, in education, in politics, or in social service may justly be called foolish and cowardly. It is foolish because it ignores what the history of humanity has confirmed as its major interest and concern, religion. The welfare of mankind is contingent upon the realization of all its essential powers and capacities. The physical, intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual nature must be ministered to and developed. Religion may not be left out of the reckoning without leaving a large space bleak and cold. To ignore the institutions of religion is folly because thereby any person who seeks complete self-expression and fullness of social relationships impoverishes the meaning of his world and deprives himself of an

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essential factor in the perfection of personality. He has cheated himself. The reply may be made, "I do not feel the need of religion, as I do of my dinner, my book, and my club; therefore the church is not necessary to me." The Hottentot does not feel the need of his book or his symphony concert; we do because we have come to the place where we are aware of our intellectual and aesthetic desires. As we reach the point where we appreciate the full content of personality we shall find that what the noblest representatives of the race have felt we also ought to feel. They have needed the institution of religion and have supplied themselves with it. Deaf men cannot enjoy symphonies; but deafness is generally regarded as an infirmity rather than an excellence. Surely to cripple one's own sources of supply for the highest life and to impose limitations upon oneself is not the mark of wisdom.

The third attitude is that of militant opposition. There are more who ignore than oppose the claim of the church upon the support of themselves and the community; but strong opposition is often encountered from those who regard the church as either an unnecessary or an undesirable part of the community. Granted that this attitude is frequently based on prejudice or misinformation, there are cases in which it rests on honest conviction. The only way to handle this is to present the credentials of the church fairly and fully, trusting that in the end reason will prevail over prejudice.

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The fourth attitude is that of alliance and co-operation, recognizing the various needs of differing individuals and groups. This is the fairest attitude for anyone to take as he faces the claims of the church on the modern world.

Every person who seeks to perfect his own life through alliance with the institutions which minister to his whole being and serve as the outlet for the expression of his total self ought to ally himself in some practical way with the church. This ought to be the kind of a church which appeals to him or finds him at the particular point where his interests are most vital, and where, therefore, he can render his particular service with the largest pleasure and the greatest economy of effort. If he is helped most by ceremony and liturgy, the liturgical churches are the proper field for his activity. If the churches which emphasize the social applications of religion are most in accord with his genius and desire, then he should seek their fellowship. There is a wide range for his choice under the present condition of church organization in the United States, and it is exceedingly unlikely that, for many generations at least, there will be one uniform church alone appealing for support in America.

The appeal of the church for the support of every person is based on far broader grounds than its value to the individual as the necessary means for the complete realization of his personality. The church, as we have shown, is the chief agent

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of the highest community service. It defines the noblest ideals of community welfare and stands behind all the best agencies that are promoting the moral and spiritual health of the people. The call for personal service to all the needs of the community is one of the outstanding characteristics of modern life, especially in a democracy. The permanence of civilization depends upon the efficiency with which all these institutions perform their functions in the life of the people. A good citizen supports the schools, discharges his political duties, bears his part in the social organization of his neighborhood, city, state, and nation, and assumes his personal responsibility in international movements. The most comprehensive expression of all these higher interests and values, the one energy that most fully permeates and supports them all, is religion. Therefore, as the place for the expression of his total influence, every citizen ought to support the church. It is necessary to his fullest development, and he, in turn, is necessary to its complete influence in the life of the world. The individual both receives from the church and gives back to his fellow-men through the church the greatest influence and the noblest service. The appeal of the church, therefore, is at the same time selfish and unselfish. What the church can give to the individual and what he can give to the church both work together in a happy and profitable mutual relationship. There is some point in the multiform

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program of the church where every person can give expression to that individual power which he possesses.

The estimate of the value of the church in any one of the aspects of its purpose and influence which we have passed in brief review is not adequate as an expression of its total appeal. Somewhere in this inventory of the whole appeal of the church there surely is at least one which will find any thoughtful person at the point of his own interest and natural equipment to render service. It is reasonable, therefore, to expect, on the grounds of altruism and community loyalty, that every person will stand ready to make his contribution at least at that point.

This contribution ought to be made in the terms of personal service. It is not difficult to write a check and thus make a money gift. But this does not fully discharge the obligation. The delegation of personal responsibility in this way is not a worthy response to the appeal of the church. We never give supremely until we give ourselves. What the church needs to-day is personal rather than purchased service. We can hire someone to act for us; but the most effective and rewarding of all service is that which we render ourselves.

Every person ought to find his own place and perform his own part in the work of the church as a reasonable response to the appeal of Christ to the best that is in every person. This is true, whatever theory of the nature and work of Jesus one may hold. This is immediately apparent in

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case Christ is accepted as Divine Redeemer and living Lord. It is also true in case the individual thinks of Him only as a great Teacher and Example. The claim of Christ upon the love and service of men is not confined to any single doctrine concerning Him. He lived the kind of a life which every person in his best moments acknowledges to be the life that he also would like to live. The place where that way of life is being taught and realized most clearly and consistently to-day is the church. The gospel and the program of the Kingdom of God deserve the personal support of every member of human society because of this reasonable and noble claim of Christ upon every man's love and labor. So, in the midst of this bewildering and yet beautiful world, the voice of Jesus still sounds, saying, "Follow me."

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